

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 ACDA-12 /112 W
-----050311 031758Z /53

R 021334Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8587
INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2467

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, ET, EG, SU
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA AGAIN REACTS TO EGYPTIAN WARNING REGARDING
NILE RIVER

REF: (A) ADDIS 2194; (B) CAIROB 12815

1. ETHIOPIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MOFA) ISSUED
STATEMENT JUNE 1 DEPLORING "WAR-LIKE" REMARKS MADE BY
PRESIDENT SADAT ON MAY 30, 1978, REGARDING EGYPTIAN IN-
TENSIONS TO PROTECT THE FLOW OF THE WATERS OF THE NILE.
SADAT'S REMARKS WERE CHARACTERIZED AS "FURTHER MANIFES-
TATION OF ANIMOSITY TOWARDS ETHIOPIA, PROVOCATIVE, AND
A REHEARSAL FOR WAR, WHICH COULD SERVE AS A SMOKE SCREEN
FOR PLANNED MASSIVE MILITARY INTERVENTION AGAINST ETHIO-
PIA." IN THINLY VEILED WARNING TO EGYPT AND SUDAN, THE
MOFA STATEMENT NOTED THAT "EGYPT AND SUDAN ANNUALLY
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RECEIVE OVER 85 PER CENT OF THEIR WATER NEEDS FROM
THE NILE. EVEN IF THIS RIVER HAS ITS INTERNATIONAL
CHARACTER, ITS NATIONAL (ETHIOPIAN) PERSONALITY CAN-
NOT ALSO BE DENIED. BUT WHEN OTHERS HAVE NO NEED FOR
FAIR PLAY AND RECIPROCITY, AND INDEED, WHEN THEY ARE
EMPLOYING EVERY AVAILABLE WEAPON IN THE BOOK WITH
WHICH TO DESTROY ETHIOPIA, THERE IS NO CONCEIVABLE

REASON WHY THIS COUNTRY SHOULD EXTEND ITS REDEEMING HANDS TO THOSE WHO ARE CONSTANTLY PLOTTING TO DISMEMBER HER." THE STATEMENT CONCLUDED THAT "EGYPT BEARS COMPLETE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ITS UNFRIENDLY AND PROVOCATIVE ACTS."

2. COMMENT: AS NOTED IN REFTEL (A), EMBASSY HERE HAS NO EVIDENCE OF ANY SOLID ETHIOPIAN OR ETHIOPIAN/SOVIET INTENTIONS TO INTERFERE WITH THE COURSE OF THE HEADWATERS OF THE BLUE NILE. (THERE HAVE BEEN PROJECTS STUDIED IN PAST, PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II, TO DAM NILE NEAR LAKE TANA FOR WATER CONTROL AND IRRIGATION; HOWEVER, THEY ARE NOT BEING ACTIVELY CONSIDERED NOW.) UNLESS EGYPT HAS INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY HERE, EGYPT'S CONCERN SEEMS UNFOUNDED AND PRESIDENT SADAT'S STATEMENTS UNNECESSARILY PROVOCATIVE. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT MOFA STATEMENT AVOIDED MENTIONING ANY OF "IMPERIALISTS" (IMPLICATED WITH EGYPT IN MOFA STATEMENT) BY NAME. MATHERON

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